

WHAT'S *New*

in the Metropolitan Police Department



*A weekly update for residents, visitors,
and workers in the District of Columbia*

Friday, October 1, 2004

OCTOBER IS CRIME PREVENTION MONTH; RESIDENTS ENCOURAGED TO GET INVOLVED

Community policing and crime prevention are year-round activities. But each year, the nation sets aside October as National Crime Prevention Month. This October, the MPDC encourages DC residents to get more involved in “Policing for Prevention” in their neighborhoods. Policing for Prevention is DC’s strategy of community policing, and there are many different ways for residents to get involved. For example, you can attend the PSA meeting in your neighborhood; PSA meetings give police and residents a chance to meet one another, identify crime problems and develop joint problem-solving strategies. Take part in your district’s Citizen Advisory Council, which works with the district commander on broader crime prevention strategies and resource needs. Walk with (or start) a citizen patrol in your community (these are often known as Orange Hats or Red Hats). Get involved with a Neighborhood Watch/Block Captain program. Start a community newsletter or Listserv. Or volunteer to support neighborhood youth. Said Chief Ramsey, “Crime Prevention Month is a perfect time for residents to get to know their neighbors and their PSA officers and to work with them on fighting crime. The partnerships we develop this month will yield positive results throughout the year.”

- ① For more information about Policing for Prevention and how residents can get involved, click on:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/pfp/together.shtm>
- ① To find out what PSA you live in, the schedule of meetings and other PSA and district resources, go to:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/districts/districts.shtm>
- ① More information and resources about Crime Prevention Month are available on the National Crime Prevention Council’s website:
<http://www.ncpc.org/ncpc/ncpc/?pg=5882-3200-12308>

CHIEF RAMSEY JOINS IN EFFORTS TO MAINTAIN DC’S GUN SAFETY LAWS

Chief Ramsey this past week joined with Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton, Mayor Anthony Williams, Schools Superintendent Clifford Janey and other leaders to voice their support for DC’s common-sense gun safety laws against Congressional efforts to undo them. On Wednesday, the US House passed legislation that would repeal virtually all of DC’s gun safety laws and prohibit the District from enacting any new anti-gun laws in the future. The Chief and other DC leaders said that with homicides in the city down almost 20 percent this year—and the murder rate less than half of what it was a decade ago—now is not the time to reverse course on gun safety. Current DC law prohibits the ownership or possession of most handguns and assault-style weapons, although rifles and other long weapons that are used in hunting, as well as handguns that were registered prior to the enactment of the 1976 law, are permitted. While sponsors of the legislation called the bill the “DC Personal Protection Act,” Chief Ramsey pointed out some of the fallacies in that argument. First, he said many cities with relatively weak gun laws (including New Orleans and Detroit) have homicide rates that are comparable to DC’s—and this year, probably even higher. Second, he said experience shows that weapons in the home are more likely to be used against the owner or a family member—in a crime, an accidental shooting or a suicide—than they are to be used against a criminal. Finally, the Chief pointed out the irony that while firearms would remain strictly off limits inside the US Capitol Building, representatives not elected by DC voters would permit loaded assault weapons to be carried on the city’s streets. While outraged that her colleagues in the House would pass such a bill, Congresswoman Norton said its chances of even being considered in the Senate are quite remote.

- ① For updates on DC’s efforts to combat the repeal of gun safety laws, visit Congresswoman Norton’s website:
<http://www.norton.house.gov/>
- ① More information on DC’s gun safety laws and related resources is available at:
<http://mpdc.dc.gov/info/family/gunsafety.shtm>

IN CONTINUING BOOST TO NEIGHBORHOOD PATROLS, CHIEF RAMSEY SWEARS IN NEW OFFICERS

In the MPDC's continuing efforts to put more officers in neighborhood patrols, Chief Ramsey on Thursday administered the oath of office to the Department's 18 newest officers. The new officers include 11 experienced officers from other law enforcement agencies who were hired under the MPDC's "lateral-entry" program. The lateral officers come from a variety of local, federal and military police forces, including the New York City Police Department, Carolina (Puerto Rico) Police, Portsmouth (Virginia) Police, US Capitol Police, Amtrak Police, and the Department of Defense, Army, Navy and Marines police departments. The seven other officers who participated in Thursday's ceremony are members of recent recruit classes who, for various reasons, were unable to participate in graduation ceremonies with their regular classes. While the recruit officers spend approximately 24 weeks in training, the lateral officers complete a condensed training program that focuses on DC Code and MPDC-specific policies and procedures. All 18 of the new officers have been assigned to uniformed neighborhood patrols in Police Service Areas (PSAs) throughout the city.

ARSON TASK FORCE CONTINUES TO SEEK PUBLIC'S HELP

The MPDC, the DC Fire and Emergency Medical Services Department and other members of the regional task force are continuing their efforts to solve the series of arsons that have plagued the DC area since March 2003. In all, 43 arsons and one attempted arson have been classified as being similar in nature, and several of the arsons have been conclusively linked. Twenty-one of the 44 crimes have occurred in DC, primarily in the Northeast and Southeast quadrants. Of the five incidents reported in September, three took place in the District, including a September 20 arson in the 2800 block of 30th Street, NE, and a September 14 attempt in the 4100 block of Anacostia Avenue, NE. This past week, DC Fire/EMS personnel passed out flyers in Northeast DC in the hopes of developing clues from residents. Investigators point out that because most of the fires have been set in the early morning hours, there have been few good sightings by witnesses. Authorities are hoping that anyone with information about the case will contact the Task Force at (301) 77-ARSON. A reward in the amount of \$35,000 has been offered for information leading to the arrest and conviction of the individual(s) responsible for these fires.

NEWS & NOTES

Suspect Arrested in Homicide of 13 Year Old. Last Monday morning, 13-year-old Michael Swann of Southeast was shot and killed while inside an apartment at 2671 Douglas Place, SE, becoming the city's 21st juvenile homicide victim this year. On Tuesday afternoon, a 20-year-old SE man was arrested and charged with the murder. Read the news release at <http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2904>

New Office of Unified Communications. Effective October 1, all of DC's 9-1-1 emergency and 3-1-1 non-emergency operations, as well as the Citywide Call Center, are being consolidated under a new agency called the Office of Unified Communications (OUC). Civilian personnel in the MPDC, Fire and EMS Department, and other affected agencies are being transferred to the new OUC, which is headed by Michael Latessa. The move is designed to better coordinate and streamline emergency and non-emergency communications, and is another step in the creation of a new Unified Communications Center on the St. Elizabeth east campus in Ward 8.

Chief Ramsey on News Channel 8, WTOP. Chief Ramsey discusses public safety issues with the public during two media appearances in the upcoming week. On Wednesday, October 6, from 4-5 pm, the Chief appears on News Channel 8's "News Talk" program, hosted by Bruce DuPuyt. Then on Thursday, October 7, from 10-11 am, the Chief has his regular monthly appearance on "Ask the Chief," on WTOP radio.

① Mayor Williams this week praised the MPDC for reaching its goal of 3,800 sworn members by the close of fiscal year 2004, which ended on September 30. Read the news release at:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/news/news.asp?sid=2907>

① For information about sworn career opportunities in the MPDC—including the lateral-hire program—go to:

<http://mpdc.dc.gov/about/employ/officer.shtm>

① For more information, including a list of fires connected to the serial arsonist, visit:

<http://151.200.189.200/Government/PublicSafety/Fire/arson.asp?h=20&s=60&n=40&n1=30>>Prince George's County Fire Department Website

DATA BOX

Homicides as of 10/1/04

- ◆ 2004: 151
- ◆ 2003: 187
- ◆ % Change: -19.3%
- ◆ Closure Rate: 57.0% (86 closures)

Adult Arrests week end. 9/25/04

- ◆ Total: 936
- ◆ Drugs: 174
- ◆ Weapons: 26
- ◆ Motor Vehicle Theft: 19
- ◆ Prostitution/Sex Offenses: 35

Juvenile Activity

- ◆ Arrests: 62 week end. 9/25/04
- ◆ Curfew Violations: 45 week end. 9/28/04
- ◆ Truants: 297 week end. 9/28/04

Firearm Recoveries as of 9/29/04

- ◆ September: 162
- ◆ 2004 Total: 1,520

Traffic Fatalities as of 10/1/04

- ◆ 2004: 38
- ◆ 2003: 53
- ◆ % Change: -28.3%

Information, ideas, or comments about this service? Send an e-mail to **KEVIN MORISON**, MPDC's Director of Corporate Communications, at kevin.morison@dc.gov. Would you like to have this information e-mailed to you? Just go to our Website and register with **Crimereports.com**.

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